

Living in the Danger Zone

As our generally ungodly society progressively worsens, it should be no surprise' to see individuals who wear the name "Christian" also heading in this direction. Some have the attitude "how close can I get to sin without sinning? Just how much can I get away with? How little can I do and be pleasing to God?" Thus, being influenced by the world, they are living in the danger zone. The eternal welfare of their soul is jeopardized. May I suggest some areas where the influence of the world is great and a word of caution is needed.

(1) Evil companions. Paul forewarned in 1 Corinthians 15:33, "Do not be deceived: bad company corrupts good morals." The people Paul had in mind may not have been "absolute filth." Maybe his warning simply had to do with spending too much time with folks who have no redeeming spiritual qualities or Godward inclinations. Being distracted from our spiritual warfare allows Satan an opportunity to take advantage of us. He will use anything or anybody he can to accomplish his purposes. Letting others determine your behavior or do your thinking for you is quite perilous spiritually. If you're in need of some good companionship, and we all are, why not spend your time with brothers and sisters in the Lord?

(2) Media indulgence. The information we filter through our mind undoubtedly affects the way we think and behave. To continually fill our minds with the world's philosophy is quite harmful whether by television, radio, movies or magazines. Seeing or hearing that which is immoral filth has no redeeming value. Also, we must be careful not to take a lighthearted or tolerant attitude toward sin when we witness it.

(3) Immodesty. It's hard to feel comfortable when you "stick out like a sore thumb" in a crowd, but the Christian must, if the majority does evil. Regardless of the world's standard of dress, Christians must adorn themselves in a manner which reflects the proper attitude of heart. (1 Tim. 2:9,10.) The sacrifice of comfort and peer acceptance is a small price to pay in glorifying God. Beware of the dangers associated with immodest dress, evil influence, lust, sexual promiscuity, etc.

(4) "And things like these." (cf. Gal. 5:19-21.) Alcoholic beverages, tobacco products, narcotics, modern forms of dance. Being engaged in these practices cannot strengthen us spiritually. They will only weaken us. Any small participation in or even too much association with these practices hurls one into the danger zone spiritually.

Beware of living in the Danger Zone! "Abstain from every form of evil." (1 Thess. 5:22.)

- by Tony Mauck

Trying To Adapt The Church To Everybody

I was never an avid baseball fan, and living in Atlanta has done little to convert me. One 4th of July, however, I did agree to go with a group of Christian friends to a Braves game. From the time we arrived at the field, I knew this was going to be different. The field was covered with performing high school bands - an appeal to all who like music. And that was only the beginning. For those preferring opera, a Metropolitan Opera star sang the national anthem. For those more political in taste, the Attorney General of the United States led the pledge to the flag. Lovers of money were tantalized by a \$500 door prize. Cartoon fans were entertained by a million dollar scoreboard featuring cartoon characters. Those living on the level of the flesh were treated to the sight of a young lady in short shorts running around the diamond sweeping off the bases between every inning. And to climax it all, there was a huge fireworks display. I don't remember what team the Braves were playing, much less who won, but that was a game I shall never forget. That was baseball for people who don't like baseball.

Far too many churches are trying to remodel the religion of Jesus Christ to make it a religion for people who don't like religion. For those desiring recreation, they offer recreation. For those desiring entertainment, there is entertainment. For those whose primary interest is secular education, they offer day care, kindergartens, schools and colleges. For those whose appetite is for food, they build church kitchens and dining rooms. The attempt is to be "the church for everybody."

Such carnal, temporal appeals were never authorized by the Lord. He intended that the church be a "called out," separated body of people. If the gospel is the only appeal, it will make that separation.

- by Sewell Hall

The Simplicity of the Gospel

Back before the Civil War "Raccoon" John Smith, a pioneer American preacher, was speaking of the plainness of the Gospel of Christ compared to the many and varied systems of men's religion. He was handed a note from the audience which said, "if the gospel is so plain as you say it is, why do you have to labor so hard to get people to understand it?"

Smith replied, "I have often prepared ground in the wilderness for a turnip patch, and though I had the kindest of soil, and the best seed, and the sowing was easy, I never got top or root till I took my axe and hoe and briar knife and went in and whacked and grubbed and cleared the ground. The Lord knows that I do not esteem it hard to preach the gospel to those who are prepared to receive it, but it is labor indeed to root out prejudice, and cut out systems, and clear away sectarian trash that cumbers the minds and hearts of the people. . ."

- by Bob Hines

1st in a series

Jesus' Law on Marriage

There is a great need for us to be stressing what the Bible teaches about marriage, divorce, and remarriage. It is sad that society has chosen to disregard God's law, and even sadder that some in the Lord's church have perverted the truth and taught false doctrine on this very important subject.

Here is Jesus' law on marriage:

- For the husband: "Whosoever shall put away his wife, except for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery" (Matt. 19:9).
- For the wife: "And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another she committeth adultery" (Mark 10:12).
- For the third party: "Whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband committeth adultery" (Luke 16:18).

It is obvious that the **RULE** of Jesus stresses the permanence of marriage. There is a single **EXCEPTION**: "except it be for fornication". Fornication is defined as any illicit sexual relationship. This exception clearly indicates that if fornication is the cause for which one divorces a mate, then the innocent party is freed from the marriage bond, and may remarry without committing adultery. Notice the proper order of events: a) married, b) one guilty of fornication, c) the innocent party obtains the divorce, d) the innocent one may remarry. It cannot be like this: a) married, b) divorced for 'any cause,' c) later one is guilty of fornication, d) the other remarries.

Study with us in coming weeks as we look at some specific false doctrines being taught about divorce and remarriage.

- by Greg Gwin